The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke*

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THE CHRISTMAS SONG

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
Peace on the earth, good will to men
From Heaven's all-gracious King—
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessèd angels sing.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow!
Look now—for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For, lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new Heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

—*Edmund H. Sears.*

THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM

WHEN nobody any longer judges or condemns his neighbor, and when everybody gives and forgives, then we shall be living in the beginning of the millennium. It needs no argument, in this world of busy tongues, to show the advantage of such a state as that. All that we want to know is how to bring that state of things about. Christ tells us that it is possible to drive all unkind speech out of the world and to put generosity and forgiveness in the place of it. The millennium is possible. But how?

We look into the books that give us pictures of the future and offer to guide us into the promised land. And the land is fair enough, and attractive enough, and a good deal of an improvement on the United States of America. But the way over to it is not so plain. We will somehow get there, the prophets tell us: there will be a social revolution; there will be a conquest of the classes by the masses; there will be this, that, and the other crisis and catastrophe; blooming out of the new life from the old; and then we will all love one another, and the brotherhood of man will be a blessed universal reality. The truth is that, while we all want the millennium badly enough, nobody is quite sure of the way to it. The blind are leading the blind, and the end of such leading is pretty sure to be a sudden fall into an unexpected ditch.

I have no faith in any dramatic beginning of the millennium. I do not believe that the curtain of cloud will roll up at the tinkle of any reformer's bell, and, behold—a new heaven and a new earth! The millennium is coming; but it is coming in very homely, simple ways; not by any oratorical resolution passed in the parliament of man, not by any vaccination of the human heart with the bacillus of brotherly love; not by might of mobs nor by strength of arms.

Christ tells us how the millennium will begin. But we listen to him as the Syrian nobleman lis-

tened to the Hebrew prophet. The nobleman, you remember, wanted to be cured of his leprosy, and he came with his retinue of servants, a gorgeous procession with trumpets and banners, he himself riding in the midst in his golden chariot; and they stopped before the plain house where the prophet lived, and the prophet sent out word that the best way to get rid of the leprosy was to go down and take a good bath in the river Jordan. And the nobleman was grievously offended. He had expected that Elisha would come out, and bow down before him, and pray to Heaven, and strike his hand over the place, and make him whole. Instead of that, he was just to wash himself in a muddy little river!

And then his servants came to him and said: "Master, if the prophet had commanded thee to do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much more then, when he bids you wash and be clean." And so the nobleman came to his right mind, and obeyed, and was cleansed.

How true that is to human nature! Here we are, praying that the Kingdom of God may come, and laying plans to convert all men to brotherly love, and wondering what is just the best way to do that, and studying political economy to find out, and imagining some wonderful new legislation, or some fine new method of taxation, or some sublime revolution—and not listening to what Christ says at all.

Christ says that if we want to put a stop to unkind and unjust judging, we must simply stop that sort of judging, our own selves. If we would not have others condemn us, we must not condemn them. If we want to bring in a revival of the spirit of forgiveness, we must ourselves be forgiving. And if we desire a better distribution of the good things of life, and want other people to give us better measure, we must begin that our own selves; we must ourselves set the standard of good measure. That is, as we do, so will others do to us. If we do well, others will do well. The whole world will become Christian if we are truly Christian. The millennium begins at home.

That is very plain and slow and homely. But it is the simple truth about the matter. It is the narrow way, and the Christian way, and the divine way, and the only way, into the promised land. There can be no regeneration of society without first a regeneration of the individual. There can be no human brotherhood except among a company of brothers. And you cannot get brotherly love by passing laws.

The Kingdom of God has no place in the geographies. The Kingdom of God is in the hearts of men. You know how, in the old days, they used to ask Christ over and over, when the Kingdom should come. But he set no date. For the Kingdom of God, the millennium, the reign of righteousness, begins wherever and whenever any man or woman stops uttering unkind judgments and uncalled-for condemnations, and begins with a new earnestness to give and forgive. And the Kingdom of God will fully come, and earth will be given another name and be christened heaven, on the very day when all the men and all the women who live upon it shall have learned that lesson of eternal love.

And so you see it depends, as I said, not upon parliaments, not upon saints, not upon socialists, but just upon our own individual selves, when the millennium shall come. Not from without, but from within, is reformation to be looked for. Not by new laws, but by new love, is society to be uplifted, and converted, and set right. And you and I must make the beginning.

Don't wait. Don't look for leaders. Begin yourself.

James Freeman Clarke describes in his fragment of autobiography a journey from Massachusetts to Kentucky in the days before the railroad. He noticed, he said, that the tone of a stagecoach party often depended on the temper of a single individual. A cross, ill-natured, complaining fellow would make all the other passengers cross, ill-natured, and complaining. "Once," he said, "when going through the Cattaraugus woods, where the road was mostly deep mire or rough corduroy, and there was every temptation to be cross and uncomfortable, one man so enlivened and entertained our party, and was so accommodating and good-natured, that we seemed to be having a pleasant picnic; and the other inmates of the coach took the same tone."

Is that not a parable of human life? Widen out a stagecoach and you get a neighborhood. And set down one individual in that neighborhood who tries a good many times a day to do what Christ says, and you get a glimpse of the millennium. That is how the millennium begins.—*George Hodges, in "Christianity Between Sundays"* (T. Whittaker, New York).

Thou cam'st not to thy place by accident—
It is the very place God meant for thee,
And should'st thou there small scope for action see,
Do not for this give room for discontent,
Nor let the time thou owest to God be spent
In idly dreaming how thou mightest be,
In what concerns thy spiritual life, more free
From outward hindrance or impediment.
For presently this hindrance thou shalt find
That without which all goodness were a task
So slight, that virtue never could grow strong;
And would'st thou do one duty to His mind,
The Imposer's—overburdened, thou shalt ask,
And own thy need of grace to help, ere long.

—*R. C. Trench*

THE CRATCHITS' CHRISTMAS DINNER

[This is one scene from the famous *Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Bob Cratchit is a poorly paid clerk in a London business office, and the good time he had with his family is contrasted with the selfish dreariness of another, richer man's life.]

Mrs. Cratchit, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence, laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons, while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, and danced about the table, while the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father then?" said Mrs. Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha wa'n't as late last Christmas Day by half an hour."

"Here's Martha, mother," said a girl, appearing at the door.

"Here's Martha, mother," cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times and taking off her bonnet and shawl for her, with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," said the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother."

"Well, never mind, so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!"

"No, no! There's father coming!" cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha! Hide!"

So Martha hid herself. And in came Bob, the father, his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable, and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim—he bore a little crutch, and had limbs supported by an iron frame.

"Why—where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming?" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming home on Christmas Day?"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if only in joke, so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the washhouse, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave at church?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant for them to remember on Christmas Day who made lame beggars walk and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool beside the fire; and Master Peter and the two young Cratchits went to the bakeshop to fetch the roast goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds—and in truth it was something like that in the little house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot. Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor. Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce. Martha dusted the hot plates. Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table. The two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and, mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long-expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all around the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried, "Hurrah!"

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavor, its size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked-out by the apple sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), "they hadn't ate it all at last!" Yet everyone had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows.

But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witnesses—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back yard and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose: a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid. All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating house and a pastry cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered, flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding, like a speckled cannon ball, so hard and firm, with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

"Oh, a wonderful pudding!" Bob Cratchit said, and calmly, too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that, now the weight was off her mind, she would confess that she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. Apples and oranges were put upon the table and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, and Bob proposed:—

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!" Which all the family reëchoed.

"God bless us, every one," said Tiny Tim. He sat very close to his father's side.

"John," said his wife, "I don't think our new maid is honest."

"Oh, don't say that," replied her husband. "She has such an honest exterior."

"Well, but you should see the interior of her bureau."

"You check your troubles with your hat," a restaurant advertises. Good enough, but believe us, we aren't going to tip anyone to get our troubles back.

"Don't they allow tenants to raise children in this apartment house?"

"No," said the janitor.

"Nor kittens, nor puppies, nor parrots?"

"No. Nothing is permitted to be raised here except the rent."

AN OLD TOWN AND ITS OLD STORY

In our own land we have no very old towns. White people have lived here only about three hundred years; those who lived here before the coming of white people seldom built any towns at all, and the few remaining traces of ancient homes have no stories belonging to them. But at the other side of the ocean there are towns where people had lived, generation after generation, for hundreds and hundreds of years before Columbus sailed from Spain. And around many such ancient towns cluster stories of wonderful and beautiful things which there came to pass.

One famous old town is in the land that borders the eastern end of the great Mediterranean Sea. A great many American travelers have been there; perhaps you may sometime go there yourself. Ocean steamships enter the Mediterranean at its western end and take passengers to the far-eastern end. There one lands; and the little town of Bethlehem is about forty miles up-country from the nearest seaport. It is on a hill, in a region that is full of hills and valleys; and in old times a high wall of stone, standing all around the town, protected it from enemy soldiers or from bands of robbers.

The houses of Bethlehem folk are built quite close together. The streets are very narrow. Many of the townspeople own farms and pastures within a few miles, and they go out each day for their work; sometimes their work keeps them out all night; but their homes are in the close-built community. There are almost no farmhouses scattered along the Judean country roads, as we have them in our own land.

A great many interesting stories are connected with Bethlehem and with people who used to live there. One of the oldest of all the stories is about a girl from another land still farther away—a girl whose young husband had died, and who came to Bethlehem with her husband's mother, of whom she was devotedly fond. The older woman had been brought up there and loved the place, but Ruth was at first a stranger. You can read for yourself the story of how she went to work to help Naomi, and how she married a rich and kindly farm-owner, if you turn to the Book of Ruth in the Bible. The story ends by telling how Ruth had a little son, whom they named Obed.

Obed afterwards lived in Bethlehem, and married, and he had a son called Jesse. Then Jesse later had several sons, and one of them, called David, became the favorite hero of the whole country. The Bible contains all sorts of fascinating stories about David: how, as a boy, he used to look after his father's sheep in one of the hillside pastures near the town; how he killed a lion and a bear; how he fought and beat a famous

giant, a fearsome enemy of the townsfolk and of the whole countryside (I Samuel, xvii). Still later David became king, and years and years after his death Bethlehem people were proud to call the place where he had spent his boyhood "David's City."

And time went on, and on.

Then, a little more than nineteen hundred years ago, that same Bethlehem became the scene of still another story—one that has become the most widely known story in the whole round world. It is a story which has been told in every country on earth, and printed in every language that has any sort of alphabet. People have studied each language carefully, to be sure just which words would best correspond with the words in which the story was first written down; indeed, it had to be thus translated for us, for it was first written in Greek words, like this:—

και ειπεν αυτοις ο αγγελος

But persons who knew both English and Greek wrote it out in the English words, which we find now in the second chapter of the Book of Luke.

And it came to pass, in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them: "*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*"

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

[Another writer, who also wrote in Greek, added this story of twelve days later. We can read it in English in the second chapter of the Book of Matthew.]

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him: "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet: 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said: "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they had heard the king they departed; and, lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Do not look forward in fear to the changes and chances of this life. Rather look to them with full hope that, as they arise, God will deliver you out of them. The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious imaginations.—*Francis de Sales.*

A LITTLE girl returning from a visit to the barber's and referring to his use of the electric clippers on her remarked to her mother, "I know my neck was dirty, 'cause he used the vacuum cleaner on it."

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass. Tel. Granite 1140

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When anyone writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary that letters be written with ink.

Those who enjoy receiving books and magazines are asked to remember that they, in their turn, can give much pleasure if they will take pains to write to the persons who send such reading matter. In cases where no word of response goes back—not even to say that the books or magazines were received—senders may suppose the parcels were not welcome. Let us each do our share.

REQUESTS

1. Since I've learned of you many kind friends, life has not seemed so hard: I have had more pleasure than for many, many years. You cannot understand how grateful I feel or how much it means to me and my little folks. I sincerely thank everyone who has written me or sent. I would be very glad of any help you could give with a Christmas tree that we are planning to have for the children and young people at our country church. We have a Sunday School, and are doing fine for such a small membership. Many of the little folks are orphans and have few pleasures. I would also appreciate very much any embroidery and crochet thread, as well as books and magazines. Those I am glad to pass on to others; we haven't any library in our community, and not many people have books to read. (Mrs.) Sula Booker, Sylvester, Ga., Route 4.

2. This is my first attempt to come to you for cheer. My husband is away from home at work most of the time. We are poor people and it is hard to live in this mountain country. I have four small children, aged from five years to four months, and would be glad if some of the friends would send me cards for the children or scraps of any kind for quilts. For reference, write to Rev. J. G. Hazle, Endicott, Va. My own address is (Mrs.) Bell Cannaday, Elamsville, Va.

3. It has been a long time since I have heard from your society; I am asking if someone could send me the *American Magazine*. I have lost my health and am not able to work. Any reading will be much appreciated.—G. Lee Roberson, Elamsville, Va., Box 32.

4. I have been married five years and have been an invalid for the last two years; had an operation a year ago last March. I stay in the house with just a four-year-old baby girl for company while my husband is at work, and would appreciate some good magazines and quilt pieces. I would be glad to correspond with some of the *Cheerful Letter* friends.—Mrs. Arthur Snead, Endicott, Va.

5. I am a boy six years old and have had asthma all my life. I would like some books to read. —Reece Graybeal, Ashland, N. C.

6. I come once more, thanking the friends for past kindness and hoping they will remember me this winter. I would be so glad of embroidery thread and pieces for quilts. I do hope someone will remember the children at Christmas. (Mrs.) Lucy Jones, Bassett, Va., Route 3.

7. I am a widow sixty-seven years old, and would be glad of some good reading matter—magazines or anything of the kind, as I live alone most of the time. I would be pleased to have a correspondent. (Mrs.) Cassie Elgin, Dodson, Va.

8. As I have started going to high school, I am once more asking a favor of you and thanking you for your kindness last winter. We live in a

lonesome part of the country and hardly get out anywhere after cold weather comes on, so we would appreciate anything in the way of good reading. For myself, in reference to my school work, I would specially like such books as *Pilgrim's Progress, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, The Sky Pilot, The Gold Bug,* or *Vanity Fair.* And I would appreciate a news magazine for my father.—Edna V. Johnson, Pedlar Mills, Va.

9. I wish to express my sincere thanks to my friends for their kind letters received since the death of my husband last May. My home is broken up now, and things have been thrown into new and unexpected relations. My husband left me a legacy—not money, but character, which I prize very highly; but I find it a great trial to fight my own way, as I am having to do. My sister and her two daughters, with whom I am staying at present, are great lovers of good literature, so I would appreciate the continued sending of literature to my new address—change from Blakely, Ga., to Ashford, Ala., Box 63. I trust you will still retain me in your affection. (Mrs.) Eva Collins.

10. I am writing again for children's literature. I have received a number of papers and clippings, of which I have made use, but have not received many books. I would be glad to have more, as there is a constant demand for them among the children. If it is not asking too much, I would be so glad to secure: *The Shorn Lamb; Miss Minerva's Baby; Hans Brinker; Heidi; Little Women* or *Little Men; Robin Hood; Hiawatha; Tilda Jane; Emmy Lou;* or any of the *Elsie Dinsmore* stories. Of course any books suitable for ages from four to twelve years are desirable. I want to thank everyone who has already sent us literature. I assure you the children enjoy all that we have received.—Mrs. Hobart Austin, Kelford, N. C., Box 54.

11. I am the mother of six children: Lora (14), Rea (12), Edward (10), Elef (6), Ada (3), and Vada, one year old. We live on a farm a mile from school. Would love for someone to send books, papers, cards or magazines for the children; they enjoy reading very much. And I would be glad to have quilt scraps. The children do not get the schooling they should, but they love their books. (Mrs.) Eliza Taylor, Whitetop, Va., Route 2.

12. I am a girl sixteen years old; my father and mother, a sister and two brothers are living. I would like to receive books or magazines, quilt scraps, and bits of ribbon or thread. My minister's name is Homer Coal.—Ola Darter, Moreland, Ark.

13. I wish to thank you and the many helpers for everything that has been sent me. I try to answer personally, but one package of silk pieces (some pieced log-cabin fashion) I never knew who sent, but I thank them anyway. The address was destroyed and some of the pieces got scattered in the mail sack. I receive magazines and find it is the best plan to loan them, have them returned, and then loan them again. I should be glad to receive the *Geographical Magazine,* the *Western Story Magazine,* books, or any other kind of reading. The school-teacher boards with me, and we plan on a Christmas tree at the schoolhouse. Any little thing to help decorate the tree, or gifts of books or anything would be gratefully used. We have on our list boys aged 4, 12, 14, 16, and 19 years; girls of 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, and 17. I look forward to that dear little paper, the *Cheerful Letter.* I sit and read it through the same day that I receive it and am only sorry I can't help it along; but some are blessed and have a spirit to help in that way. The only consolation I have is to help around my door, while others may cross the ocean and spread the good tidings far and wide. But the widow's mite was blessed and accepted, and I am thankful for that. (Mrs.) Hattie Teeples, Bridger, Montana.

14. *Tanglewood Tales, Ben Hur, Robinson Crusoe,* and *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* are asked for by Mrs. P. B. Rucker, Amherst, Va.

15. Mrs. Edgar Leflor, Ansonville, N. C., mother of three little children, asks for any good reading.

16. Mrs. C. M. Bradley and niece, Ruby, Sandidges, Va., will be glad of reading.

17. Miss Addie Eanes, Bassett, Va., Route 2, the only girl at home, gets lonely, and would appreciate books, magazines, and crochet thread.

18. Mrs. T. Iverson Murphy, Coolidge, Ga., Route 2, Box 30, would be very glad of magazines.

19. Miss Minnie Starlin, Berwind, W. Va., an orphan eighteen years of age, living with an uncle, will appreciate reading and cards.

20. Mrs. Posey Whitlow, Bassett, Va., writes appreciation of the reading sent her, and hopes to be remembered through the long winter.

21. Miss Christine Rea, Spencer, Va., again asks us for things suitable for her school Christmas tree. She is very grateful for all that is done for her. This year she has an enrollment of thirty-nine, with more to follow soon. She asks

for dolls, whistles, story books, in fact anything suitable for youngsters.

22. Mrs. Lucy Boyd, Elamsville, Va., will be glad of cards and books for her little girl of nine years and boy of five.

23. Miss Katherine Pettitt, Pine Mountain, Harlan Co., Ky., will be grateful for *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Simple Life* (Wagner), *The Man without a Country* (Hale), Poems, Plays, and Essays by Goldsmith, books by Oliver Wendell Holmes and S. M. Crothers, *Mosses from an Old Manse* and *Tanglewood Tales* (Hawthorne).

24. I have not received any reading matter for some time. I would be glad if some of the members could send me—after reading it—either *Sabbath Reading* or *The Methodist*. The girls, aged 13, 10, and 8, would be pleased to get cards or paper dolls. I want to thank the lady who sends me the *Cheerful Letter*. (Mrs.) Susie M. Turner, Dodson, Va., Box 10.

25. Mrs. Clara Board, Boyce, Warren Co., Ky., asks for sacred music and music for a quartette, also for "anything to read."

26. Mother and myself live alone. We would be very glad to receive books or magazines and scraps for quilts. Please write to Sallie Ray Vannoy, Crumpler, N. C.

27. I wish I could thank you properly for the reading received in the past. I just don't know how I could have got along without it. My health has not been good for nine years, since I had a severe sickness. I am thirty-four years old; have been married sixteen years and have four children. I would be glad if you would include their names on your list: Dwight (15), Mary (13), Hazel (11), and Jerome (8). They all like to read. I do everything I can for them, but we cannot afford to buy books and magazines. If you have reading matter suitable for them, nobody could appreciate it more. I have wished so much for the *American Boy* for Dwight. We live in the western part of North Carolina, just at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains; have an ideal climate, not very severe either winter or summer; can raise a variety of crops. Our home is a mile from the square of Lenoir. I enjoy letters so much.—Claudia (Mrs. R. A.) Baird, Lenoir, N. C., Route 3, Box 199.

28. I wish to thank all who have remembered me in the past with magazines and papers. I would love to thank each one, but some had no name attached when received. I guess the friend who sends me the *Youth's Companion* has returned from the trip to Paris; while there he sent me a card telling how grand a time he was having. "'Tis sweet to be remembered, to know we're not forgot." I would be glad to get reading for my two boys, aged 15 and 10, and for myself also. Best wishes for all my *Cheerful Letter* friends. (Mrs.) Aldia V. Wyatt, Vulcan, Va.

29. Will you please publish my change of address in your blessed little paper? I have experienced a great loss; on the second of September my dear husband passed away suddenly, in his sleep. I have broken up my little home and come here to stay with my youngest daughter. They are lovely and kind to me, but I miss my husband and my home so much! If you can, please send me some books and current magazines. I shall soon be sixty-one years old. My former address was 314 East Wheeler Street, Three Rivers, Mich. It now is (Mrs.) Cora A. Hoskinson, 1014 West Green St., Decatur, Ill.

30. I hasten to let you know how much I would appreciate a box of books. I teach in the primary grades, so would be glad to get anything suitable for that work; and I have children of my own in the high school, and would like to have good books for them. Books for the school library are much needed.—Mrs. W. M. Peele, Aulander, N. C.

31. I am a farmer's wife and live in a lonesome place. I would be glad of quilt pieces of any kind, and also of bits of ribbon and such things for some children that I am interested in, and reading matter for myself. I work in the Sunday School and church services, trying to stamp the lives of the young people with good. (Mrs.) Dora Smith, Polkton, N. C., Route 1.

32. I am a mother of nine children; the oldest (boys) are twins of 23, then two girls 21 and 18, then five boys, from 14 years to 6 months. I would appreciate anything to amuse the younger boys; three of them go to school in winter, and will be glad of books and cards. I should be glad to have a correspondent. I have received some magazines and quilt pieces from *Cheerful Letter* friends, and wish to thank them all. I should like to have more. (Mrs.) Maggie A. Sheppard, Campbell, N. C., Route 1, Box 13.

33. Artie Fielder, Rector, Ark., is anxious to receive *Bringing Up Father*.

34. Mrs. A. Evans, Madison Heights, Va., Route 1, the mother of five children from ten to eighteen years of age, living in a rented home, finds it "hard to keep things going." She asks for any cheer, and particularly for a Bible.

35. Mrs. Henry Nelson, Critz, Va., Route 1, Box 54, sends thanks for reading matter already received and asks for *In His Steps* and *The Broken Wedding Ring.*

36. Here I come again, thanking all who have sent me things in the past. I would appreciate any cheer for the coming winter, as my husband is not well and we both are getting old. (Mrs.) Bettie Hundley, Stuart, Va.

37. I wish to thank all the *Cheerful Letter* friends for the things they have sent me. I hope they will remember me in the holidays and the coming year. We are not able to buy much for our children and keep them in school, and my health is bad at present. I would be glad to have some crochet thread.—Mrs. W. R. May, Lansing, N. C.

38. It is coming cold weather, and my husband and sons are over in Kentucky. I would be greatly pleased to receive reading—any kind so the stories are all there, or pictures and cards. I have four children at home: one girl 15 years old; she would be pleased to have some kind of paper to draw on and colors, also embroidery thread, as she does all kinds of embroidery. We are to have a fair at our school November 24, and would be grateful for anything to help out.—Mrs. F. T. Snell, Ironsburg, Tenn.

39. My mother lived till the fourteenth of this month; she celebrated her ninety-eighth birthday a week prior to her death. Her health had been gradually failing for the last six or seven months and I devoted all my time to her, so I miss her the more. I am entirely alone in my home now. Will you please let my friends know through the *Cheerful Letter* that this is why I have been silent so long? I would be glad to hear again from them or from other friends.—Mrs. H. C. Martin, Vinton, Va.

40. Mr. S. B. Smith would like a Hymnal with the notes. His address is 514 Henry St., Leaksville, N. C.

41. The *Atlantic Monthly,* beginning with July, 1923, would be very acceptable to Mrs. H. C. Sanborn, East Thetford, Vt.

42. Mrs. J. A. Drumheller, Pleasant View, Va., wishes to thank each one of the *Cheerful Letter* friends who have remembered her and her children in the past, and hopes she may be remembered in the future. Such kindness she finds a great help.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. Alan Pressley Wilson from Marietta, Pa., to 1635 Edmonson Ave., Baltimore, Md.

Mrs. Bettie A. Short from Martinsville to Marytown, W. Va.

Mrs. Sarah Gilbert from Olive St. to 405 Maple St., Atlantic, Iowa.

NEW NOTICES

Mr. Ernest W. Goodspeed, 321 Franklin St., Cambridge, Mass., is much interested in the *Cheerful Letter* work and in young men. He offers to help any young men who are shut-in, or lonely, or who wish to have a correspondent.

There is a splendid opportunity to help Mrs. Sands, the chairman of the Home Study work, by providing copies of Young and Field's *Literary Readers* (Vol. 4), published by Ginn & Co.; also *Language Lessons from Literature* (Books 1 and 2), by Alice Woodworth Cooley, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company. May we not hope that this need will be met, to help the educational work of the Exchange?

Mr. Smith, hearing music at his neighbor's house, decided he would drop in and see how they were. Mr. Jones welcomed him and ushered him into the parlor, where his daughter was playing the piano and his son singing. Mr. Smith begged them to continue. They consented. The first song they selected was "Mother." They sang this very feelingly and then father joined in the chorus. This was followed by "Mother Machree" and other of like sentiment. Then they stopped for a while and Mr. Jones commented on songs about mother—how true they were, how dear, and how they loved to sing them. Then, as Mrs. Jones hadn't appeared yet, Mr. Smith inquired about her state of health. "Oh," said Mr. Jones, "she's well enough. She's in the kitchen doing the dishes, but after she has finished and has taken in the wood she'll join us."—*Judge.*

Don't flatter yourselves that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into relations with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies—they are ready enough to tell them.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Caller—So this is the old settle you to d me you had picked up at such a bargain. My dear, it's a perfect treasure! It looks as if there might be some real old legend connected with it.

Hostess—Well, there was, but at the price I offered, the dealer said he would have to keep the legend and connect it with an antique bedstead that he had.

THE LEAVES AND THE WIND

"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day,
"Come over the meadows with me and play.
Put on your dresses of red and gold;
Summer is gone, and the days grow cold."

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all.
Over the brown fields they danced and they flew,
Singing the soft little songs that they knew.

"Cricket, good-bye—we've been friends so long!
Little brook, sing us your farewell song;
Say you are sorry to see us go;
Ah, you will miss us, right well we know!"

Dancing and whirling, the little leaves went;
Winter had called them, and they were content.
Soon fast asleep on their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlet over their heads.

—*George Cooper.*

THE CHILDREN'S EYES

The *Boston Transcript* recently published these interesting and important notes on the care of children's eyes, quoting Dr. Charles Sheard, a member of the medical staff at the famous Mayo Hospital at Rochester, Minnesota:—

The eyes are our greatest medium of education. "Seeing is believing," but if a child does not see correctly with the physical eye, the mental eye (the brain) can never believe correctly. The child's brain is exposed to the outer world just the same as in your case and mine, in just two places—the two eyes. The back of the eye contains the retina, a thin membrane which has its nerve and blood supplies. This net work of nerves forms an important part of the whole nervous system, and if the eyes are abused headaches often result. And if the eyes do not focus correctly, the brain sees objects just as "blurred" as are the pictures one gets when a camera is out of focus. You would send back your photos to the photographer if these were all "fuzzed or blurred up" and refuse to accept them. Yet hundreds of children (and grown-ups, too, for that matter) have photos delivered to their brains which are all "blurred up," but which they cannot send back or refuse to accept. But there is a remedy in either case; the photographer can adjust his camera lenses and these children can have scientific lens corrections or, in other cases, medicinal or surgical assistance applied to the eyes, or other parts of the body.

There are a few points on the care and protection of children's eyes which everybody should know:

1. A great number of subsequent defects and serious impairment of the eyes, as well as blindness, can be prevented by the proper care of the eyes of newly born babies. The eyes of the newly born infant should receive immediate and proper treatment by thoroughly cleansing with a weak solution of silver nitrate. This will destroy and remove germs and bacilli which may produce infection. Doctors and nurses, of course, know this, but the prospective parent, should also be acquainted with this fact so that the proper materials may be at hand to meet any emergency which may arise. Doctors, hospital and dispensaries are only too glad to assist in this matter and to give advice in the way to use these germicides and cleansers.

2. When the lids of the baby's eyes become swollen or scaly, when inflammation or redness of the eye appears, or when there are discharges from the eye, consult a physician who, in certain instances, may recommend consulting a specialist in eye diseases.

3. Put nothing except clean water into or around the baby's eyes, except upon the advice or order of a physician. Clean, pure water is needed; no trace of soap or other ingredient unless recommended by a physician.

4. Avoid all sources of contamination. Care should be exercised to avoid excretions or discharges from any part of the body of the child, or other person, coming near or in contact with the eye. Don't wipe the baby's eyes with the same handkerchief with which you wipe its nose, or your own nose or face. Of course, everybody knows that every child, as well as the grown-up, should have its own towels, wash-cloths and other toilet articles. Cleanliness is next to godliness, costs nothing, prevents trouble, and often saves the loss of a bodily function, such as vision.

5. Babies should not be exposed to bright lights. Kittens are born with their eyes shut as a protection against light, but not so the human offspring. Babies need air and sunshine, but this should be subdued sunlight and they should be so placed as to prevent sunlight from striking them. The hoods on baby carriages, and window shades and curtains are made to regulate the light as well as to protect against wind and air currents which may not only irritate the eyes by reason of their violence but may also carry dust and other undesirable matter into the eyes.

6. Baby specialists generally condemn the use of pacifiers, for more reasons than one. Simple objects of bright colors may be either bought or made which can be hung at a distance of several feet away from the young child. Very little handling of small objects is suggested, since the strain upon the tender eyes of babies

may add to latent tendencies which may exist toward squinting, or cross-eyes as it is popularly called.

7. The eyes of babies often appear to squint, or be "cross-eyed" or "wall-eyed." During the early months when the child is learning to see, the two eyes have not acquired the ability to work together. In other words, nature has to teach them, just as two good horses have to be trained to drive together as a team. Various reflexes occur from colic and gas on the stomach and these often cause occasional squinting eyes. Little concern need be exercised about these squints until the age of a year. If, as the child learns to walk, talk and handle objects, the eyes develop an apparent cast or squint, so that either both eyes appear to turn in toward the nose or one seems straight and the other turns toward the nose excessively, then due attention should be given to this matter. Most squints are associated with refractive errors of the eyes and can be, in many cases, corrected with proper lenses. Those who are experts in caring for human eyes and eye-sight should be consulted and their advice followed. After the child reaches older years, the chances of straightening such eyes by means other than operative are greatly lessened, and the vision in one eye generally becomes reduced as time goes on.

8. The entry of a child into school marks the formal beginning of the days of training for a future life of usefulness. Send a whole child to school, or as nearly whole as can be developed. To fight with a broken sword is an unfair battle. And yet thousands of school children enter into school life lacking correct vision, suffering from tonsils and adenoids, and other defects. The parent should not shirk his or her responsibility and expect school authorities and inspectors to play parent to his child. Neither should he or she trust to luck that all is well. People of intelligence are coming to realize that it pays in every way to have a periodic physical examination—once a year, on one's birthday. Send as nearly a whole physical child as possible to school, so that the school may turn back a physically and mentally sound young man or woman to play an efficient part in the world's work.

A GIRTON undergraduate, having inadvertently changed umbrellas with a fellow-student, is said to have evolved this note: "Miss —— presents her compliments to Miss ——, and begs to say that she has an umbrella which isn't mine, so, if you have one that isn't hers, no doubt they are the ones."

"I WONDER why Maud gave Jack Rounder the mitten."

"It was the result of the yarns he gave her, I guess."

A CHILD'S EVENING HYMN

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With Thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee;
Guard the sailors, tossing
On the deep blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night-watches
May Thy angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise,
Pure and fresh and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.

—*Sabine Baring-Gould.*

FATHER, Thy wonders do not singly stand,
Nor far removed where feet have seldom strayed;
Around us ever lies the enchanted land,
In marvels rich to thine own sons displayed.

Open our eyes, that we the world may see;
Open our ears that we Thy voice may hear;
And in the spirit land may ever be,
And feel Thy presence with us always near.

—*Jones Very.*

THERE'D be more to make us happy,
Less to make us weep and frown,
If that lady named Miss Fortune
Would get wed and settle down.

MOTORIST—I am exceedingly sorry I killed your dog, madam. Will you not allow me to replace him?

MISS OLDUN—Oh, sir! This is so sudden!

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letters and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc.*, also *letters offering to give books, magazines, etc.*, should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

See special suggestions under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this number.

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimble Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters asking for music* and *letters offering music* should be sent to Mrs. Thomas Lacey, at 4 East 88th St., New York City, or to All Souls Church, Fourth Ave. and 20th St., New York City.

5. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Stevens, 26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and forty-nine libraries are now on our lists.

6. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mass., should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from others interested in the organization and its methods.

Notice to those who give:—

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classics, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

To those who receive:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one ask for money or for clothing in the columns of this paper. The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

THE RUMFORD PRESS, CONCORD